
GUIDANCE COUNSELING SERVICES

The Governing Board recognizes that a structured, coherent, and comprehensive counseling program promotes academic achievement and growth, and serves the diverse needs of district students. The district shall provide an educational counseling program that offers students services and supports within a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework, in accordance with law. Counseling staff shall be available to provide students with individualized reviews of their educational progress toward academic and/or career and vocational goals and, as appropriate, may discuss social, personal, or other issues that may impact student learning and well-being.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that all persons employed to provide direct school counseling, school psychology, school social work services, child welfare and attendance services, and/or to implement equitable school programs and services that support students' academic and social and emotional development and college and career readiness possess the appropriate credential from the Commission on Teacher Credentialing authorizing their employment in such positions. Responsibilities of such positions shall be clearly defined in a job description.

Responsibilities of school counselors include, but are not limited to:

1. Engaging with, advocating for, and providing all students with direct services, such as individual counseling, group counseling, risk assessment, crisis response, and instructional services, including mental health and behavioral, academic, and postsecondary educational services, and indirect services, including but not limited to, positive school climate strategies, teacher and parent/guardian consultations, and referrals to public and private community services
2. Planning, implementing, and evaluating school counseling programs
3. Working within a MTSS that uses multiple data sources to monitor and improve student behavior, attendance, engagement, and achievement
4. Developing, coordinating, and supervising comprehensive student support systems in collaboration with teachers, administrators, other pupil personnel services professionals, families, community partners, and community agencies, including county mental health agencies
5. Promoting and maintaining a safe learning environment for all students by providing restorative practices, positive behavior interventions, and support services and by developing and responding with a variety of intervention strategies to meet individual, group, and school community needs before, during, and after a crisis
6. Intervening to ameliorate school-related problems, including problems related to chronic absences and retention

7. Using research-based strategies to promote mental wellness, reduce mental health stigma, and to identify characteristics, risk factors, and warning signs of students who develop, or are at risk of developing, mental health and behavioral disorders and who experience, or are at risk of experiencing, mistreatment, including mistreatment related to any form of conflict or bullying
8. Improving school climate and student well-being by addressing the mental and behavioral health needs of students during a period of transition, separation, heightened stress, and critical changes, accessing community programs and services to meet those needs, and providing other appropriate services
9. Enhancing students' social and emotional competence, character, health, civic engagement, cultural literacy, and commitment to lifelong learning and the pursuit of high-quality educational programs
10. Providing counseling services for unduplicated students who are classified as English learners, eligible for free and reduced-priced meals, foster youth, and/or experiencing homelessness, including interventions and support services that enhance equity and access to appropriate education systems and public and private services
11. Engaging in continued development as a professional school counselor

Educational And Career Counseling

Beginning in grade 7, parents/guardians shall receive a general notice at least once before career counseling and course selection so that they may participate in the counseling sessions and decisions. (Education Code 221.5)

The educational counseling program shall include academic counseling and postsecondary services, in the following areas (Education Code 49600):

1. Development and implementation, with parent/guardian involvement, of the student's immediate and long-range educational plans
2. Optimizing progress towards achievement of proficiency standards and competencies
3. Completion of the required curriculum in accordance with the student's needs, abilities, interests, and aptitudes
4. Academic planning for access and success in higher education programs, including advisement on courses needed for admission to colleges and universities, standardized admissions tests, and financial aid
5. High-quality career programs at all grade levels in which students are assisted in doing all of the following:
 - a. Planning for the future, including, but not limited to, identifying personal interests, skills, and abilities, career planning, course selection, and career transition

- b. Becoming aware of personal preferences and interests that influence educational and occupational exploration, career choice, and career success
- c. Developing work self-efficacy for the ever-changing work environment, the changing needs of the workforce, and the effects of work on quality of life
- d. Understanding the relationship between academic achievement and career success, and the importance of maximizing career options
- e. Understanding the value of participating in career technical education pathways, programs, and certifications, including, but not limited to, those related to regional occupational programs and centers, the federal program administered by the U. S. Department of Labor offering free education and vocational training to students, known as "Job Corps," the California Conservation Corps, work-based learning, industry certifications, college preparation and credit, and employment opportunities
- f. Understanding the need to develop essential employable skills and work habits
- g. Understanding entrance requirements to the U.S. Armed Forces, including the benefits of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test

The district's educational counseling program also may include, but not be limited to, identification of students who are at risk of not graduating with their peers, development of a list of coursework and experience necessary to assist students to satisfy the curricular requirements for college admission and successfully transition to postsecondary education or employment, and counseling regarding available options for students who fail to meet graduation requirements to continue with their education.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish and maintain a program of guidance, placement, and follow-up for all high school students subject to compulsory continuation education. (Education Code 48431)

To enhance the educational counseling program and assist students in reaching their educational and professional goals, the district shall provide students in grades 9-12 with financial aid support; social services support; state-funded immigration legal services; academic opportunities; and parent/guardian and family workshops. (Education Code 54680, 54683)

As part of the district's educational counseling program, students may be offered mental and behavioral health services under which a student may receive prevention, intervention, short-term counseling services, and mental health related classroom instruction to reduce stigma and increase awareness of counseling support services.

No counselor shall unlawfully discriminate against any student. Guidance counseling regarding school programs and career, vocational, or higher education opportunities shall not be differentiated on the basis of any protected category specified in law or Board Policy 0410 - Nondiscrimination in District Programs and Activities.

Additionally, counselors shall affirmatively explore with a student the possibility of careers, or courses leading to careers, that are nontraditional for that student's sex. (Education Code 221.5)

For assessing or counseling students, the district shall not use testing or other materials that permit or require impermissible or unlawful differential treatment of students, unless such different materials cover the same occupations and interest areas and the use of such materials is essential to the elimination of bias and discrimination. (5 CCR 4931)

Colleges and prospective employers, including military recruiters, shall not have access to students for recruiting purposes. (Education Code 49603; 10 USC 503)

The Superintendent or designee shall collaborate with businesses, government agencies, postsecondary institutions including universities and career technical schools, community organizations, and/or other employers to provide students with actual or simulated work-based learning opportunities through college and/or career fairs.

When planning to hold a college or career fair, the Superintendent or designee shall notify each apprenticeship program in the county. The notification shall include the planned date, time, and location of the college or career fair. (Labor Code 3074.2)

Additionally, the district shall provide the notification to any community college district that has overlapping jurisdiction with the district and an opportunity for the community college district to participate in the college or career fair. (Education Code 52770)

Personal or Mental Health Counseling

A school counselor, school psychologist, or school social worker may provide individualized personal, mental health, or family counseling to students in accordance with the specialization(s) authorized by their credential. Such services may include, but are not limited to, support related to the student's social and emotional development, behavior, substance abuse, mental health assessment, depression, or mental illness. As appropriate, students and their parents/guardians shall be informed about community agencies, organizations, or health care providers that offer qualified professional assistance.

Written parent/guardian consent shall be obtained before mental health counseling or treatment services are provided to a student, except when the student is authorized to consent to the service pursuant to Family Code 6924, Health and Safety Code 124260, or other applicable law.

Any information of a personal nature disclosed to a school counselor by a student age 12 years or older or by the student's parent/guardian is confidential and shall not become part of the student record without the written consent of the person who disclosed the confidential information. The information shall not be revealed, released, discussed, or referred to except under the limited circumstances specified in Education Code 49602. (Education Code 49602)

A counselor shall consult with the Superintendent or designee and, as appropriate, with the district's legal counsel whenever there is uncertainty regarding how to respond to a student's personal problem or when questions arise regarding the possible release of confidential information regarding a student.

Crisis Counseling

The Board recognizes the need for a prompt and effective response when students are confronted with a traumatic incident. School counselors shall assist in the development of the emergency and disaster preparedness plan and other prevention and intervention practices designed to assist students and parents/guardians before, during, and after a crisis.

Early identification and intervention plans shall be developed to help identify those students who may be at risk for violence so that support may be provided before they engage in violent or disruptive behavior.

Additionally, the Superintendent or designee shall identify crisis counseling resources to train district staff in effective threat assessment, appropriate response techniques, and/or methods to directly help students cope with a crisis if it occurs.

Teacher-Based Advisory Program

The Board recognizes that a supportive, ongoing relationship with a caring adult can provide a student with valuable advice, enhance student-teacher relationships, and build the student's feelings of connectedness with the school. The Board authorizes the development of a teacher-based advisory program in which teachers advise students in such areas as academic planning, character development, conflict resolution, and self-esteem. Any teacher participating in this program shall be under the supervision of a credentialed school counselor as appropriate, receive related information and training, and be subject to law and this Board policy, including requirements pertaining to student confidentiality and nondiscrimination.